

A PUMPKIN-SHAPED CONTAINER**BY****CHARLES WON ET. AL.****BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention relates to a container for carrying and collecting items. More particularly, this invention relates a pumpkin-shaped container for carrying and collecting items as children go door-to-door during Halloween.

During Halloween, children traditionally enjoy dressing up in costumes and going door-to-door to collect candy and other items. In addition to the costumes, children carry a bag or a container to hold candy that has been collected. One such collection device includes a plastic pumpkin with facial features, commonly known as a Jack-O-Lantern.

This tradition of children going door-to-door to collect candy has become increasingly popular overseas.

Although plastic pumpkins are not expensive to ship due to each pumpkin weighing less than one pound, they are very bulky and require large boxes and thus are difficult to transport and expensive to ship, especially overseas.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention contrives to solve the disadvantage of the prior art.

5 An objective of the invention is to provide a pumpkin shaped container that increases the ability of a shipper of these items to ship them in a compact manner that reduces the space required by as much as five times the space required to send one pumpkin-shaped container. This
10 reduction in necessary space effectively will reduce the cost and energy required to ship the pumpkin-shaped container.

 Another objective of the invention is to provide a pumpkin-shaped container for ease of storage when the item
15 is not being used, as it is commonly a seasonal item.

 To achieve the above objectives, a pumpkin-shaped container includes a first half, a second half, and a fastener to detachably attach the first half and the second half together. The first half and the second half form a
20 hollow main body when the first half and the second half are assembled by engaging the fastener. The hollow main body has a top opening for access into the main body and a decorative portion.

In a first embodiment of the pumpkin-shaped container, a mating line between the first half and the second half is perpendicular to the top opening. The first half has a first top opening half, and the second half comprises a second top opening half. The first top opening half and the second top opening half form the top opening when the first half and the second half are assembled.

The decorative portion of the pumpkin-shaped container has depressions that represent facial features of a Jack-O Lantern. The depressions are painted with one or more dark colors. In the alternative to depressions, the decorative portions are cut-outs that represent facial features of a Jack-O Lantern.

The fastener includes a plurality of fixing projections provides on the first half along the mating line between the first half and the second half, and the second half has a plurality of fixing recesses provided on the second half along the mating line between the first half and the second half. The fixing projections are inserted into the fixing recesses and fit tight with each other when the first half and the second half are assembled. The fastener further includes a flexible hinge positioned between the first half and the second half and

opposite to the top opening, and integrated with the first half and the second half.

The fastener further has an upper fastener that is positioned near the top opening, and a lower fastener that
5 is positioned opposite to the top opening. The lower fastener has a hinge positioned on the mating line between the first half and the second half. The hinge has an L-shaped projection on the first half, and an U-shaped projection on the second half. The U-shaped projection
10 engages with the L-shaped projection when the first half and the second half are assembled so that the first half and the second half are not separated.

The upper fastener has a first Velcro pad on the first half and a second Velcro pad on the second half. The first
15 Velcro pad engages with the second Velcro pad when the first half and the second half are assembled.

Alternatively, the upper fastener includes a lever pivotally attached on the first half and a pin fixed to the second half. The lever has a hook that is engaged with the
20 pin when the first half and the second half are assembled.

As an alternative to fixing projections and fixing recesses, the second half of the pumpkin-shaped container is rotatably attached to the first half to allow the second half to rotate over the first half.

In a second embodiment of the pumpkin-shaped container, the mating line between the first half and the second half is parallel with the top opening, and the top opening is provided on the first half. The fastener has a
5 similar construction as in first embodiment.

The advantages of the present invention are: (1) a pumpkin-shaped container that consists of halves so the halves are foldable on each other for space efficiency; (2) a pumpkin-shaped container that when the halves are
10 folded on each other take up no more than one-fifth the space of an one-piece pumpkin-shaped container; (3) a pumpkin-shaped container that consists of halves that when the halves are attached together provide the same use as an one-piece pumpkin-shaped container; (4) a pumpkin-shaped
15 container that is convenient and inexpensive to ship because the halves are foldable over each other; and (5) a pumpkin-shaped container that saves space and is easy to store in relation to an one-piece pumpkin.

Although the present invention is briefly summarized,
20 the fuller understanding of the invention can be obtained by the following drawings, detailed description and appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGSS

These and other features, aspects and advantages of the present invention will become better understood with
5 reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a pumpkin shaped container with a lever, hook and pin fastener according to the first embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of a pumpkin shaped
10 container with according to the second embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 3 is a front elevation view of the pumpkin shaped container;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a portion of the
15 pumpkin shaped container with a Velcro fastener;

FIG. 5 is a front elevation view of a first half of the pumpkin-shaped container;

FIG. 6 is a front elevation view of a second half of the pumpkin-shaped container;

20 FIG. 7 is a cross-sectional view of the pumpkin-shaped container taken along line 7-7 of FIG. 3;

FIG. 8 is a cross-sectional view of the pumpkin-shaped container with a hinge fastener taken along line 8-8 of FIG. 7;

FIG. 9 is an elevation view of the pumpkin-shaped container with the second half rotatable over the first half;

Fig. 10 is a cross-sectional view of the pumpkin-shaped container taken along line 10-10 of FIG. 9, with the second half rotatable over the first half;

FIG. 11 is a perspective view of the pumpkin-shaped container where the second half is rotated over the first half;

FIG. 12 an elevation view of the pumpkin-shaped container showing that the first half and the second half are connected by a flexible hinge so that the halves together with the hinge may be injection molded as a single piece; and

FIG. 13 is a partial cross-sectional view of circle A in FIG. 12 showing the flexible hinge connecting the first half and the second half.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

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FIG. 1 shows a pumpkin-shaped container **10** according to the first embodiment of the present invention. The pumpkin-shaped container **10** includes a first half **12**, a second half **14**, and a fastener **16** which attaches the first

half **12** and the second half **14** together. The pumpkin-shaped container **10** also has decorative portions **18**. The decorative portions **18** can either be depressions on the surface of the pumpkin-shaped container **10** or cut-outs. The decorative portions **18** are comprised of the facial features of a Jack-O-Lantern such as the eyes, nose, and mouth. In this embodiment, the pumpkin-shaped container **10** is divided vertically into halves; the first half **12** and the second half **14**, so that a mating line **24** between the first half **12** and the second half **14** is formed perpendicular to the top opening **22**. The first half **12** and the second half **14** form a hollow main body **20** when the first half **12** and the second half **14** are assembled by engaging the fastener **16**. The first half **12** and the second half **14** also form the top opening **22**. The fastener **16** includes a lever **26** having a hook **28** engaging with a pin **30**. The lever **26** is pivotally attached to the first half **12** and the pin **30** is fixed to the second half **14**. The hook **28** of the lever **26** is engaged with the pin **30** to secure the first half **12** to the second half **14** when the halves are assembled.

FIG. 2 shows a second embodiment of the pumpkin-shaped container **11** in which the first half **13** and the second half **15** are divided horizontally. The first half **13** provides a top opening **23** of the pumpkin-shaped container **11**. The

second half **15** provides the base of the pumpkin-shaped container **11**. A mating line **25** between the first half **13** and the second half **15** is parallel to the top opening **23**.

FIG. 3 shows the pumpkin-shaped container **10** in
5 elevation view.

FIG. 4 shows another embodiment of the fastener **16**. The fastener **16** in this embodiment are Velcro pads **32**. The first Velcro pad **34** on the first half **12** faces downward so it can attach itself to an upward facing second Velcro pad
10 **36** of the second half **14**. When the two Velcro pads **32** are put together, the first half **12** and the second half **14** are assembled together.

FIG. 5 shows still another embodiment of the fastener **16**. The fastener **16** includes a plurality of fixing
15 projections **38** around the circumference of the mating edge of the first half **12**. The fixing projections **38** are inserted into a plurality of fixing recesses **40** around the circumference of the mating edge of the second half **14** as shown in FIG. 6 so that the first half **12** and the second
20 half **14** can be tightly fit together to form the pumpkin-shaped container **10**. In the assembled state, the fixing projections **38** and the fixing recesses **40** are fit together tightly and are thus not visible from the outside.

FIG. 7 shows the first half **12** and the second half **14** with a mating line **24** that is perpendicular to the top opening **22** in an assembled state of the pumpkin-shaped container **10**. In this embodiment, the fastener **16** is a
5 hinge **42**. The hinge **42** has an L-shaped projection **44** on the base of the first half **12** and an U-shaped projection **46** on the base of the second half **14**. The U-shaped projection **46** is hooked onto the L-shaped projection **44** so that the first half **12** and the second half **14** are assembled together and
10 will further secure the first half **12** and the second half **14** to each other. FIG. 8 shows the hinge **42** in plan view.

FIGS. 9-11 show yet another embodiment of the fastener **16** where the mating line **24** between the first half **12** and the second half **14** is perpendicular to the top opening **22**.
15 The second half **14** is attached at the base of the pumpkin-shaped container **10** by a pivot access **48**. The pivot access **48** allows the second half **14** to rotate over the first half **12**. Specifically, FIG. 11 shows the pumpkin-shaped container **10** in a state where the second half **14** is either
20 rotated or folded over the first half **12**. It is in this state that the pumpkin-shaped container **10** is most compact and convenient to store or ship as it takes up about one-fifth of the space the pumpkin-shaped container **10** takes when it is in the assembled state.

FIGS. 12 and 13 show that a flexible hinge **50** is provided between the first half **12** and the second half **14** and opposite to the top opening **22**. The flexible hinge **50** is integrated with the first half **12** and the second half **14** so that the halves **12**, **14** and the flexible hinge **50** can be injection molded as a single piece in a state shown in FIG. **12**. As shown in FIG. 13, the flexible hinge **50** is round when the container **10** is in a shipping state. When the halves **12**, **14** are assembled as shown in FIG. 3, the flexible hinge **50** is flattened.

While the invention has been shown and described with reference to different embodiments thereof, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that variations in form, detail, compositions and operation may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the accompanying claims.